(b) to (d) The Department of Tourism every year prioritises tourism project in consultation with the State Government for providing financial assistance. For the year 1996-97 five projects for the development of tourism in Gujarat have been prioritised, however, the State Government of Madhya Pradesh has not identified any project for Central Financial Assistance. The projects identified in Gujarat for financial assistance during 1996-97 are :

(1) Flood lighting of Dwarkadhish Temple at Dwarka; (2) Re-furbishment of monuments, Suntemple at Modhera; (3) Re-furbishment of monument-Step well at Modhera; (4) Public Convenience at Ambaji; and (5) Flood lighting of Lakhota Place, Jamnagar.

(e) and (f) No Sir. Does not arise.

[Translation]

Kurmi Caste

5475. SHRI THOMAS HANSDA : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the people belonging to Kurmi caste of Jharkhand area of Bihar State were under the Scheduled Tribe category prior to 1993;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the style of living; traditions and worship of the Kurmis are similar to that of the other tribes of the above area;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether there has been no social, economic and educational development of the Kurmi caste there;

(e) if so, the reasons therefor;

(f) whether the Union Government propose to include the Kurmis of Jharkhand area in the list of Scheduled Tribes;

(g) if so, the time by which they are likely to be included in the ST List; and

(h) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) The information is being collected.

(f) to (h) The matter is under the consideration of the Government.

[English]

PCOs in Madhya Pradesh

5476. SHRI VISHVESHWAR BHAGAT : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of PCOs functioning in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) the number of PCOs have been closed during each of the last two years; and

(c) the reasons for their closure ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The total number of local and STD PCOs working in Madhya Pradesh as on 31st July, 1996 is 18185.

(b) Number of PCOs closed during 1994-95 and 1995-96 are 213 and 303 respectively.

(c) 221 PCOs were closed on request from franchisees, 293 due to non-payment and 2 PCOs were closed due to misuse.

Marathi Channel

5477. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the State Government of Maharashtra has submitted a proposal to the Union Government to start a Marathi channel 'MAI MARATHI' on Doordarshan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(d) the time by which it is likely to be started ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) and (b) Chief Minister, Maharashtra wrote on 6th April, 1995 requesting Doordarshan to start "Mai Marathi Channel".

(c) and (d) It is the endeavour of Doordarshan to accommodate, as far as possible, the demands of all the language groups. At present, regional programmes in Marathi are telecast by Doordarshan on DD-I from 1630 to 2030 hours (Monday to Friday) and 1630 to 1930 hours on Sundays. In addition, Marathi programmes are also telecast on regional language satellite channel (DD-10), which can be seen in any part of the country through an appropriate dish antenna.

Allotment of STD/PCO Booths to Women

5478. SHRI DILEEP SANGHANI : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the norms for allotment of STD/PCO booths;

(b) the number of STD/PCO booth allotted in Gujarat during each of the last three years, district-wise;

(c) the number out of these allotted to women;

(d) whether there is no provision for allotment of such booths to women; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor and whether the Government propose to include women in the norms/ criteria ?